1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

The lineage defends itself equally against antisocial tendencies, says Schebesta. Sluggards find that they receive no share when game from the hunt is divided; the selfish woman who does not share any of her gathering products with others is ostracized. Incorrigible thieves, and above all those suspected of sorcery, who are considered the worst types of antisocials, are punished relentlessly, exiled from the camp, and left to die if they are not executed by some means or another. Unfortunately, Schebesta cites neither examples in detail nor enough cases to substantiate fully his conclusions. He seems, however, to be generally in accord with what is known of Mbuti groups elsewhere, except with regard to the position and authority of the elder and the alleged "system" of law and punishment.

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

Exact Knowledge

There is little information on division of time and space among the archers. Maes (1934) gives the result of his work among five Mamvu-

[P.186-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

621 Younger men, regardless of family or lineage
627 ties, brought food to the transgressor, who
684 stayed outside the camp for two days. His reappearance on the third day caused no excitement on either side. This must not be taken as a full account of the incident. Undoubtedly a great deal is not known about how the settlement was effected, but it is useful to show with what informality a serious transgression can be dealt with.

571 The intimate nature of a Pygmy camp is stressed by Putnam. Even in the middle of the night, when people are inside their huts, a conversation at one end of the camp can be clearly
578 heard at the opposite end. Thus, even a matri-
527 monial squabble may well become enlarged
593 until it involves the entire band. Matrimonial disagreements and allegations of flirtation and of selfishness or dishonesty in the division of the meat are frequent causes for dispute. Dis-
626 putes may be resolved entirely by self help, which may involve a fight or a beating, by public abuse or ridicule during the group dis-
578 cussion, by ostracism, or exile. The group dis-
626 cussion, mainly among men but with comments
562 hurled at them by their wives, is the main regulatory mechanism. Both Schebesta and Putnam agreed that the part played by the women, who do not participate directly in these

[P 231-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[p. 231-C]

gatherings of the men but sit outside their huts, listening and making loud comments, is not insignificant. In the early stages of a dispute among the net hunters, a woman may take a leading part on behalf of whichever member of her family is involved, but not when the dispute becomes the topic of these evening discussions.

Apart from the driving of the incestuous youth from the camp, there is no record of even temporary forcible exile from an Mbuti band. Individuals who offend the group are, however, ostracized and induced to go elsewhere.

Whatever the dispute, and at whatever level it takes place, the entire band is concerned in its settlement. If it is settled in its early stages, it may be assumed that it is with the approval of all. As long as a single voice is raised in disagreement, the dispute continues. Even over a question of hunting, or of moving camp, it may take several days, says Putnam, to reach a decision.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

538 114 with origin, but rather with dissociating the insignificant from the significant, regardless of origin. A collection of legends as told by four men of the Epulu net hunters, then, is something of great value but to be used with care. Mrs. Putnam made such a collection, totaling some 200 legends. Its very size, coming from a single hunting band, adds to its value. To a person knowing the band and the men who told the legends, the significant can often be easily distinguished from the insignificant. But source material of this kind needs much fuller documentation than is available for use to be made of it for purposes of sociological analysis (see Turnbull, 1959).

538 [626] [1] Similar caution is needed with legends, which, as with the archers, are an important means of expression for the net hunters. The legends are also effective means of social control and illustrate attempts to rationalize the unknown. If we talk about "Mbuti legends," we not only open ourselves to questions as to whether particular legends are of villager or Pygmy origin, but we also imply that the legends necessarily have traditional significance for the Mbuti. The Mbuti like a good story; they will retell it whatever its source. A legend may have had some particular significance for the people to whom it originally belonged, but for the Mbuti its only importance may lie in the scope it offers their histrionic talent.

[P. 233-B]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

the forest, and metaphorically into further dependence upon the forest.

Witchcraft being such an important part of their own lives, the villagers are unable to conceive how the Mbuti can survive without knowledge of the necessary procedures, and as in other instances, they assume control of appropriate situations and provide the procedure. Upon death in a village, for example, the cause of death must be determined, and the cause is usually believed by the villagers to be witchcraft or sorcery. If they do not discover the cause, the witch or sorcerer may continue to kill. The Mbuti have no knowledge of divination of this kind, so it is done for them by the villagers, and the villagers believe that this places the Mbuti in a dependent position. In fact of course it does not, because the Mbuti believe in natural causes rather than supernatural.

Similarly the Mbuti have no need for the concept of witchcraft to enable them to exert social control. They have their own procedures in this respect, but nonetheless they do sometimes use the village concept of witchcraft to regulate relationships with the village, still denying any belief in "witchcraft substance." They are aware, then, of the social value of witchcraft.

VILLAGE SORCERY

While from the Mbuti point of view sorcery is effectively synonymous with witchcraft, from the village point of view sorcery, being quite different, is by its very nature more directly related to the problem of exerting control over the Mbuti. No villager will admit to being a sorcerer, but there is nothing particularly reprehensible in a villager claiming to hire a sorcerer to curse an Mbuti. All he does in fact is to say that he has had a curse laid. (He may go to the local doctor and persuade him to take action, but in that case his action is legal and is not technically "sorcery," though the net result is much the same.) The curse, alleged or actual, is sometimes followed by the sickness or death of the person cursed.[1] But even if it is not, sooner or later some disaster will come to the family or band of the person cursed, and the villagers will claim that this is the result of the curse.

Insofar as the Mbuti consider the two worlds as being apart, and do not feel bound by their own code of forest behavior to behave in

[1] I have known three young Mbuti who were cursed for not having fulfilled a bargain with an Ngwana villager and died within a few months.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

its own hearth to kindle its own fire in the new camp. The responsibility of members of a nuclear family in times of crisis, such as birth, puberty, marriage and death, does not differ much from the responsibility of the band as a whole, the difference being one of degree or intensity.

The age group functions as a major institution of education, instructing the group junior to it in its ways, preparing it for advance to the next, their own, level. Thus the care and education of children rests largely with youths and the oldest of the elders. Youths and hunters depend on each other in the joint hunting and gathering activities, the youths learning from their mothers and fathers all they will soon need to know as hunters themselves. Hunters gradually associate more and more with the *mangesé* (literally, "the great ones") around the evening fires, to listen to the talk of the elders and, in time, to participate.

As an economic unit the age group is of supreme importance. Children scavenge and help supply their own needs through fishing, trapping, snaring and any other forms of collecting or hunting within their means. In this they may at times be helped by the youths. The youths are of vital importance to the hunt, the girls acting as beaters with their mothers, and also collecting, while the boys stand guard at the extremities of the circle of nets, having assisted in setting up the nets. Youths may also be expected to perform a number of chores such as fetching wood and water into the camp. The hunters are the prime unit responsible for the sustenance of the band; the *mangesé* are absolved from such responsibilities and may expect to be fed, housed and clothed by the younger age groups.

Politically each age group has informal jurisdiction over its members, utilizing ridicule and ostracism, sometimes driving a member to seek acceptance in the lower age level, or justification by the upper. For a lower age level to ridicule or ostracize a member of a higher level is a supreme condemnation and a most powerful sanction. Further, it will be seen that part of the *molimo* festival is a morning tour of the camp by the youths, carrying the *molimo* trumpet and disguised by leaves and branches, at which time they single out the hut of any troublemaker, however young or old, and threaten to tear it to pieces. Even if there is no such troublemaker, the youths will go from hut to hut stripping a few leaves off the roof of each, causing other minor damage, simply representing the accepted principle of authority, of law and order.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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CHAPTER 9

The Life Cycle

DAILY LIFE

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The life of the nuclear family is so closely interwoven with that of the band that it is not always easy or possible to separate which activities and occasions are the concern of which. The difference is only one of degree, for even the most insignificant and routine action in the daily life of the family is potentially of major concern to the band as a whole. Thus a man seeking to borrow his brother's pipe may provide the occasion for a petty jealousy to flare up and divide the brothers, if not the camp (this case is quoted in full in the section on Government). In fact, in a society where there is no formal legal institution for the redress of wrongs, individuals resort to self-help and forcibly bring their case to public attention by deliberately provoking an incident. It is important then that there should be a pattern of behavior that is generally accepted, and which covers every conceivable activity so that there may be some direction and constancy in the ensuing discussion. The degree of "general acceptance" is of course not of such rigidity as to preclude the flexibility necessary for the pursuit of justice. But beneath the evident ambivalence there is a recognizable pattern of things that should or should not be done. This pattern is sometimes most plain in matters that seem most trivial, such as the insistence that embers that fall from the fire should not simply be scooped or pushed back, but should be picked up and placed on top of the fire; the feeling that anyone passing through a stream should wash himself, or at least a part of himself, even if he crossed another turn of the same stream a few yards back. If anyone is silent and untalkative, this is considered unusual and unfortunate. If one trips up accidentally, or stumbles even while crossing the camp, without harming anyone or anything, there is a distinct air of reproach among the onlookers. Such patterns of generally accepted behavior

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2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

of youths, will be left in charge of the camp and of any children that elect to stay behind. Any child old enough to make the decision does so himself. If his parents do not want to be bothered with him he has a wide range of classificatory mothers and fathers to call on, or if he is old enough he will simply join his own age group and set off with them. Girls always go with the women; boys go with their fathers, youths may go with their fathers or on their own. If a father has a particularly long net he may welcome an extra spear or bow and arrow nearby, and his adolescent sons serve in this capacity.

The hunt is described more fully in Chapter Ten. Here it is only necessary to point out that among the net-hunters, where a net is owned by married men or by extremely rare, gifted bachelor hunters (youths), the hunt effectively divides itself into nuclear family groups but not into nuclear families, for each family, during the hunt, is itself divided by age and sex. The family-owned nets stretch out in a long semicircle, end to end, and the women act as beaters, forming a corresponding semicircle opposite. But each net is utterly dependent on the others, as is each beater, and it is the co-operative aspect of the age group that is emphasized, rather than the distinctness of each family. The division of spoils similarly stresses band rather than family values, and the hunting songs and dances that take place after, and sometimes before, the hunt further illustrate that the hunt is considered an affair of the band as a whole.

When the hunt returns to camp there is immediate excitement as those who stayed behind crowd around for tales of all that happened, and maybe for a few tidbits of raw meat. In the confusion, men and women alike, but particularly women, may be seen furtively concealing some of their spoils under the leaves of their roofs, or in empty pots nearby. For although there will have been some sharing on the scene, there is always more back in the camp, and family loyalty is not that subject to band loyalty that there is no cheating.

The food is prepared and cooked right away, and while this is being done a hunting dance may take place, in which men and women and children all take part. This dance is frequently imitative of hunting activities, with older people taking the part of the animals hunted. Any unusual event of the day's hunt may be reenacted, and this is also an occasion where the sanction of ridicule may be applied to any hunter, male or female, who is considered to have been unsatisfactory. It is not uncommon for a husband to lead a dance ridiculing a wife who, through her laziness as a beater, spoiled his chances.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Women are equally quick to ridicule the menfolk when there is justification.

This is also a time favored by youths for slipping off into the forest with their girl friends for some not very quiet lovemaking. Although lovemaking is not performed openly, no great attempt is made to conceal it. The general feeling is that if surprised in the act, one simply says hello (*karibu*) politely and expects the intruder to continue on his way. Fathers, and mothers too, refer to the nuisance of a flirtatious son or daughter whom they might surprise in this way. The parent pretends to see nothing in such a case, and the youths claim, with more bravado than truth perhaps, not to be unduly disturbed unless they are making love to a relative.

Lovemaking generally takes place in the forest, though there is no fixed rule. It is thought somewhat exciting to make love in a hut, but not very healthy. There are preferences that individuals have for making love near a stream, or in a splash of sunlight, or in the dark depths of the forest. It is evidently a purely aesthetic consideration, and I have heard a number of youths who stated that the best time was while hunting. But moonlight evidently attracts a great number, and I have met several who talk, with great poetry, of the joys of masturbation when alone in the moonlight. On three rare occasions I have seen different individuals dancing, by themselves, in the moonlight and in the forest, away from the camp. The intimacy between the individual and the forest—one might almost say the act of making love to the forest—was expressed by one Mbuti who said, when I questioned him as to why he was dancing alone, that he was dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon. He then continued his dance with the utmost unconcern.

Not all lovemaking is quite so romantic, however, and when boys and girls are following a trail together, the procession may degenerate into a good-humored but undeniably lusty orgy. A boy may rip off a girl's outer bark cloth, if he can catch her, but he may never have intercourse with her without her permission. I know of no cases of rape, though boys often talk about their intentions of forcing reluctant maidens to their will.

There are no formal bachelor huts, but many camps have informal variants. They are sometimes built for an older youth by his mother, or they may be taken over by adolescent boys or girls when the occupant leaves for some reason. In such huts, and even out in the open, around the campfire, it is usual to see not only youths but also

E: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

of the youths will put it across his shoulders and take it back to the camp, or it will be divided on the spot. Such division, however, is not considered final, and further sharing may be demanded on return to the camp if the hunt was not fully rewarding.

The system of sharing is nowhere the same, and the frequent interchange of visitors between hunting bands renders sharing even more complex. Each band, however, will state certain rules, and will not hesitate to override them in order to bring about the recognized goal—equitable distribution of the spoils, with special consideration for the owner of the successful net and for anyone who contributed to the kill by using or lending his spear, and so forth. Elders and children are allocated certain parts of each animal, and this helps to insure that these nonhunters are cared for adequately, though their friends and kin will always provide them with more if needed. If the hunt is so successful that game falls into every net, then there will be no sharing, though there may be exchange simply for the sake of preferences of taste.

This is not to say that sharing takes place without any dispute or acrimony. On the contrary, the arguments that ensue when the hunt returns to camp are frequently long and loud, and appear to be almost deliberately sought. One such example is when someone will invoke the rules of sharing of another band, where perhaps she or he may have a relative. Indeed it is remarkably seldom that the Mbuti will admit to having had a completely successful hunt. As a result, the return of the hunters is the inevitable signal for personal grievances, however far out of context, to be aired and expressed in terms of sharing rights. There is no formal settlement of the dispute, but invariably there is a compromise and there will be an exchange, at least, if not a sharing. This is undoubtedly an important outlet for petty hostilities and jealousies, which are automatically kept well within bounds by the very fact that, whatever the nature of the original dispute, it is made to relate to the hunt. No dispute can be allowed to threaten the co-operative pattern of the hunt, for subsistence depends completely upon the continuation of such close co-operation. This is of course particularly true among the net-hunters, whose hunting technology demands larger bands and closer and more constant co-operation between band members.

Following is an example of different rules for the distribution of game:

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Area	*Portion of body*	*Given to*
Nduye	Head	Women
	Back and legs	Shared all around
	Private parts	Dog-owner (who will give them to the dog)
	Intestines	Shared all around
	Stomach	Elders
Biasa	Head	Owner of dog
	Chest and legs	Shared all around
	Back	Dog-owner
	Private parts	Children and elders
	Stomach	Elders

It will be seen that the only element the various systems have in common is in the selection of certain categories of people. Women are separated from the men among all three net-hunting bands and one archer band. The net-owner corresponds to the archer dog-owner. Elders are singled out everywhere except at Biasiku, where the hunters said they would be obliged to give the elders whatever they wanted. Children figure in two net-hunting bands, and only in one archer band, where they are coupled with elders.

The only kinship relations specified are "sister and sister-in-law," which can perhaps be better interpreted simply as "women," among the Wamba net-hunters, and "dog-owner's father" at the Kilo archer camp, where the hunters were insistent that the rump would be given to the father, if alive, for him to divide among the other elders as he thought fit. In practice, however, sometimes using a village system of kinship obligations, the Mbuti men and women will make claims on grounds of kinship. In any case, as stated, the actual sharing generally is accomplished to suit the needs of the moment rather than to satisfy any system, stated or otherwise.

The net-hunt can then be seen not only as a determining factor on the size of the band but also as a major mechanism for insuring cooperation of band members, and for allowing daily expression of internal hostilities and providing for their resolution through the highly fluid "system" of sharing. While the net-hunt expresses the importance of the nuclear family in that the nuclear family is the basic hunting unit (the father owning the net, the mother beating toward

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

it, the children standing guard at the net or at the fringes of the hunt), nonetheless the nuclear family is divided in the hunt, and both men and women are forced to co-operate with their neighbors, who may or may not be kin. The hunt above all is not an individual affair but involves the band as a whole, as is borne out in the ultimate disposition of the spoils.

That the net-hunt is regarded as a matter of importance to the forest, regarding the forest in a religious sense, is evidenced by the hunting fire, the song and the dance, rather than by any elaborate ritual, purification, or sexual taboo. The close relationship between the hunt as an economic activity and the hunt as a religious act is seen in the widespread custom of rubbing ashes from charred forest woods into the skin, sometimes slitting the skin first to achieve permanent tattoo marks. This is stated to secure the protection of the forest.

Whereas I was never able to secure confirmation of Schebesta's description of food offerings being made to the forest, except through villager informants, there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is necessary for the band's needs for the day. This in fact may be one reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers. There is no expression of joy in the capturing and killing of an animal, though the excitement still runs strongly. The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absentmindedly do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.

The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a gift of the forest, and a gift that may be withheld if abused by waste. It is further considered that good hunting is essential to the success of either an *elima* or a *molimo* festival, and during such festivals certain hunts are devoted expressly to supplying the festival with food.

Among the archers, the system of sharing game and the respect for game are comparable in their political and religious connotations:

2: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

554 The various fields in which we can speak of authority fall into three
121 main categories—economic, ritual, and legal. In the first two, by authority is meant prominence of activity and participation in discussion in what is, generally, a normal situation. In the last category, legal, the situation is abnormal, one of dispute, and by authority is meant prominence in the settling of that dispute. Nowhere does it have any validity unless backed by common assent. Yet it is more than mere influence, for in each field certain classes of individuals are recognized as having the right and ability to interpret the pleasure of the forest.

554 Table 8,[1] indicates the distribution of this "authority" throughout
56 the band. It will be seen that it is evenly divided between the sexes
[562] and among all adult age levels; only the children are not accorded any authority except among themselves. Further, authority is located at one age level or another or with the nuclear family, with few exceptions. For the life crises (excluding birth), authority is divided between the youths and the elders. Youths and elders also share responsibility for the camp while the hunt is away, even if some of the hunters remain behind.

554 There are many examples of Mbuti who have appeared in the role
[548] of leader vis-à-vis the village, but as their authority was nil in relation to forest life, they need not concern us here. Their only function in the forest, other than their normal role as hunters, was to communicate the wishes of the one group of people to the other.

554 The only individual who might be recognized as occupying a special
156 political position in the life of the hunting band, on any ground other
622 than age, is the camp clown. He is usually a hunter, and his position
626 is unofficial, depending on his abilities as an actor and a clown. He
627 is not appointed, and there is no special name for him or his position. However, every band seems to have its clown. His function is to act as a buff between disputants, deflecting the more serious disputes away from their original sources, absolving other individuals of blame by accepting it himself. Frequently he will end a dispute simply through the use of ridicule, and although such ridicule may be taken as a form of judgment, the essential point is that once again its objective is to divert attention from the source of the dispute and also to divert blame from anyone who is clearly in the wrong. The major concern of all, except possibly the prime disputants, is that the dispute shall be ended, and frequently by creating or reviving another, lesser dispute the clown brings the disputants into the same frame of mind.

[1] [see page 330-- Analysis]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Everyone recognizes that the slightest rift in the band can lead directly to hunger through failure in economic co-operation.

The clown, however, never passes judgment or exerts authority (except through ridicule); he is better considered, in this role, as a professional scapegoat, a person outwardly not deserving respect or authority. Because of his antics, and the Mbuti love of mime, he is popular, but the blame he takes upon himself is often expressed with feeling, and it is only his ability to turn ridicule upon himself and to laugh at himself that rescues him from what would otherwise be constant opprobrium. His status as a hunter is unaffected by his role as a clown, and depends solely on merit.

There is one type of person, however, and there were two examples in the Epulu band, who leans toward the assumption of individual authority. Every Mbuti is nothing if not a powerful individualist who expresses his opinions with force and clarity. But he generally does not claim any support for his opinions other than his own experience and ability. Some men, because of exceptional hunting skill, may come to resent it when their views are disregarded, but if they try to force those views they are very promptly subjected to ridicule. Ekianga and Njobo were two such hunters in the Epulu band. Ekianga was constantly being ridiculed for his matrimonial difficulties (he was a rare Mbuti, with three wives, living in the same camp with his in-laws by sister exchange). Even his elder sister ridiculed him at times. Njobo was sometimes rather unkindly ridiculed for infertility. Out of four successive wives he only managed to sire one child, a son, who became crippled in adolescence with tuberculosis of the leg. His current wife had given birth to a daughter who out of politeness was generally accepted as Njobo's, though all the evidence pointed in other directions. He was, at least, accredited as the social father.

Of the two, Ekianga probably had the more influence in the band, and his unique position as a polygamist was undoubtedly related to both his prowess and his pride. There is, however, no parallel with the situation acutely described by Lévi-Strauss (1955, pp. 325–39) for the Nambikwara. Ekianga was indeed a potential leader, but the band did not derive its major characteristics from him. Still less was generosity demanded of him (in return for his three wives), and by no means was his undoubted dynamism contrasted by a passivity of the rest of the band. Nonetheless, his three wives and all the consequent "noise" were accepted by the band, and although it was not spoken of as an exchange, it was expected of Ekianga that he would be a

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

began more and more frequently to talk from midcamp. Like Asuku, he complained about laziness and bad hunting, common enough complaints but seldom aired from midcamp. When he began to claim special attention by virtue of being Njobo's "son," however, he was promptly ridiculed. People stopped listening to him, even from midcamp, and dared him to name them—a procedure that commands attention. Even unmarried youths called out, "Your noise will kill us all," and children began to imitate his whining voice. Masisi, a cousin of Njobo and, with Manyalibo, about to move from the status of hunter to that of elder, took Mbaaka aside at one point and talked to him quietly, recalling what had happened to Asuku.

Seeing that Mbaaka at last had begun to listen to reason, his brother, who up till then had never interfered, made a loud and rude joke that brought the whole camp down with laughter, then said, "Everyone is crazy—I'm going to sleep," and promptly went to sleep. Masisi then returned to midcamp with Mbaaka and said that if anyone else tried to be funny he would turn himself into a villager and bewitch everyone. A youth took up the thread and said that the village was responsible for all the noise anyway, because his girl friend never listened to him any more and was a bad cook (a typical pygmaean non sequitur). This rather forced good humor persisted throughout the next day, with the women telling jokes and laughing loudly the moment the conversation drifted in the direction of Mbaaka's former complaints. There were a few more remarks to the effect that the village was indeed responsible for all the noise, and the rest of Mbaaka's stay (two further months) was unmarred by any repeated claims to privilege through kinship to Njobo.

It is plain, then, that while any movement toward individual authority, conscious or otherwise, is sharply countered, and while individual authority is virtually nil, there is nonetheless a clear basic framework to support the values of the hunting band. There is the division of leadership, according to field, throughout the entire band, yet there is the midcamp site from which anyone may harangue all present. Although he has no means of compelling attention, it is generally accorded, and may be further compelled by pointing to or naming the individuals concerned. Further it is plain that the elders, including those hunters whose position is being gradually taken over by their children, act as final arbitrators, always careful to stress that what they say is a matter of their opinion, or of their heart. Only when unanimity is beyond question is an opinion or an action con-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1968) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

554 529 [718] [152] sidered "pleasing to the forest." Asuku had placed himself, physically and morally, beyond the forest.

In the two instances cited so far, although the kin relationship of 602 Asuku and Mbuaka to Njobo was the source of their claim to special 604 privileges, this was recognized as a village attitude, and a valid vil- 554 lage argument. It is noteworthy that the details of the relationship were never spelled out once, except by Asuku and Mbuaka. The attitude of all the Mbuti was one of respect for Njobo, but of equal recognition of all those who shared the same central hearth, including some who were not even affines. It was stated very clearly by Moké [621] that though Asuku was a member of the band by virtue of having shared the same hearth, he had no more privileges than anyone else of that hearth, and was under the same obligations of respect and responsibility to his elders.

554 602 There was one other elder who could claim the same respect as Moké, by reason of age, and that was Tungana. But Moké had the added advantages of being a widower and virtually unrelated to any- [608] one in the band. He claimed fictitious relationship with Tungana, it being said that the same foster mother fed them both, and he frequently gave Tungana's "clan" name as being his own. Clan names [614] were seldom mentioned in disputes, except in a village context, and even then they in fact referred to a unit that was either nonlineal or cognatic, and not confined to one clan. Rather than differentiate be- [621] tween lineal units, the Mbuti used the concept of the hearth (*kuma*). [354] Each family had its own hearth, but there were also several central hearths, each shared by a number of families.

602 621 [354] Each camp, except the smallest, was distinguished by several such central hearths, effectively breaking the camp into subcamps that usually revealed a line of fission or fusion, but which frequently ran counter to all kinship considerations. As far as the Epulu band was concerned (and I believe this to be true of many other bands), authority was again, as with other aspects of life, more associated with age and territory than with kinship. Each section of the camp was, 621 in a limited sense, a political unit, and sometimes disputes would 578 remain confined to one section without spreading to others. A man • 626 could invoke kinship or friendship to go to the aid of a disputant in another section, if he wished, but somebody like Moké was even more free to wander wherever he liked. The rules of self-help among [152] the Mbuti are quite simple. It is perfectly proper to hit someone with anything wooden; it is not at all proper to draw blood, nor to hit any-

one on the forehead, which is considered a dangerous spot. In the frequent marital disputes, any man who hits his wife on the head or in the face promptly loses any sympathy he might have had from his fellows. A dispute that follows such lines almost invariably ends with an elder, male or female, physically interposing himself between the disputants, who then revert to hurling abuse which becomes more and more exaggerated until it is so humorous that even they join in the laughter. Alternatively they may lapse into a sulk, which will last for the rest of the day and through the evening, but will be gone in ample time for the next day's hunt to take place as though nothing had happened.

If a dispute becomes widened in scope, however (and this is generally achieved by one of the disputants naming someone, either in his own support or as a supporter of his antagonist), it will ultimately involve the entire subsection of the camp, and quite possibly the whole camp. In either case the process is the same. Whatever the cause of the dispute, it is still regarded as essentially the concern of the individuals concerned. Rather than attempt a probably impossible reconciliation of the excited participants, the rest of the band joins in an effort to divert attention away from the actual cause of the dispute. If this fails, they attempt to dissipate the blame by raising all sorts of minor but associated disputes, so that a number of people become involved. If blame still seems inescapable, the camp clown is likely to try and take it on himself, or else it will be put upon him by the others. The disputants, in my experience, accept this device as a genuine solution. There is no attempt whatsoever, nor have I heard of it in other bands, to make any restitution other than verbal.

As already mentioned, a dispute may be stopped simply by making life intolerable for the disputants by miming them and throwing them into ridicule. If these measures fail and the dispute persists, the hunting automatically suffers, and if no reconciliation is effected, the band splits, either forming two subsections or remaining as a single band, with the splinter section joining another band, at least temporarily.

Not only is the attachment of blame avoided or dissipated as rigorously as possible, and restitution largely ignored, but punishment is almost completely unknown. There are one or two instances where a youth might be thrashed by communal decision, but they are rare and foreign to Mbuti nature. Closer to an indigenous system of pun-

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meaningless trivia. Such disputes I have put in a class by themselves, though wherever a deeper underlying dispute was known to have lain behind an apparently trivial dispute, it has been classified accordingly.

DISPUTES CONCERNING FOOD

1. A mortar was borrowed by Njobo's sister, Teningbengé, from Amaloku, Amabosu's wife. There is no kin relationship. Teningbengé's subsequent cooking did not please her son (Maipé, actually her nephew), who complained that the mortar must have been dirty. Amaloku, who by then had retrieved the mortar, said that on the contrary it was the food put into the mortar that was dirty, and not the mortar itself. Maipé promptly seized a log of wood and started fighting with Amabosu. Amaloku and Teningbengé fought with sticks. Amabosu's mother, Sau, joined the fight, against her daughter-in-law's oldest sister, old Asofalinda. The dispute remained thus confined and was watched with much enthusiasm and laughter by the rest of the camp until Ekianga, brother to Amaloku and Asofalinda, stepped in and stopped the fighting by seizing the sticks and logs and throwing them away. Everyone returned to his hut and continued the evening meal.

2. Masisi, a great hunter, complained that the hunting was bad and said the band should move to the village and eat there. His cousin, Manyalibo, moved to midcamp and began a tirade against Masisi and everyone else for always complaining there was not enough food. He cited ten antelope caught that morning as evidence of the good hunting, and said that everyone should be happy and should be making the forest happy by singing, with so much food. And if they wanted more food they should hunt more and make the hunt even better. He said that if Masisi's noise continued he was going to leave.

Moké then took his place and quietly told everyone that nobody should leave for anywhere, that nobody could deny that the hunt was reasonably good, and that therefore the forest was pleased. If they moved or made too much noise it would be displeased. The forest would be happy if the whole band were to set out the next day on the biggest hunt of all. Then when the weather was better (it had been raining for some days, always a cause of discontent and discomfort) and nobody was making a noise, the whole band could move wherever it liked (knowing that in such a mood it would move fur-

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ther away from the village, and thus further away from a source of friction).

There was no singing, but it was done as Moké suggested. Murmurs of assent came from all over camp, with both Masisi and Manyalibo agreeing loudly.

3. Particularly at the beginning of the honey season, when tendencies to fission are already well marked, disputes over food, particularly over hunger attributable to poor hunting, are made occasions for enlarging the rift between the camp segments. Thus one day old Tungana's younger son, named after his distant relative Njobo, came flying back from the hunt in hot pursuit of his wife, Nakoranja. Nakoranja, much to everyone's surprise, had lost her bark cloth and was holding a leaf in front of her private parts, occasionally removing it to emphasize her cry of "I am naked!"

Having made her point she disappeared into her hut and modestly continued her description as to how her husband had torn her bark cloth off to shame her because she wanted to join her "sister" (who was a member of another segment), Ekianga's youngest wife. Young Njobo, standing outside the hut, told the camp that his wife was useless on the hunt, that she could not run as fast as even the slowest animal and let them all escape. Now they had no food and they would be hungry all day. Evidently she could not run as fast as her husband either, for he had caught her and given her a sound beating, ripping off her bark cloth when she tried to escape. He did not deny this, and Nakoranja said that this entitled her to pack up and leave.

Evidently this was something that had been brewing for some time, and when the hunt came back and it was seen that the dispute was forming along the line of fission, Tungana intervened and said that there was no sense in everyone making so much noise, that the next day he and his wife were going to leave for the village, and that young Njobo and Nakoranja were coming with them to look after them. The discussion immediately turned to the dangers of the trail, with the two segments siding with each other in common and equally insincere but polite opposition to Tungana's suggestion.

4. At a later stage, when fission became inevitable, discontent being so high that the sections were not uniting in the hunt and therefore not getting any meat, old Moké intervened. He stood in midcamp and harangued each section in turn, facing it and naming its members. He emphasized that this was the honey season and that hunting should be stopped anyway, and everyone go to the forest in search of their honey trees, "you in this direction, you in that."

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their honey trees, "you in this direction, you in that." But Moké did an unusual thing. He said it was all right for the camp to split, but it would displease the forest if it split badly, and it *was* splitting badly (*"apa ndaso aké sinana"*). Tungana had gone to the village; Masisi, siding with Tungana but not wanting to join him, was planning to go east, Ekianga to the north; Cephu was going to leave the territory altogether; and Manyalibo's head "walked without sense" (said in KiNgwana: *"kichwa yaké a na tembela wazi-wazi"*) and he didn't know where he was going. This was all bad. For this was one camp, it was Kolongo's.

Kolongo had been dead some three years, and the names of the dead are rarely mentioned. The whole camp fell silent, and very quietly Moké recounted the history of the friendship between Kolongo and Njobo, and how they used to hunt together and kill lots of elephant and catch lots of antelope and how they always had full stomachs. "Kolongo never allowed noise, Njobo never allowed noise. Now there is nothing but noise, and we are hungry. Kolongo is dead, but that person there, Ekianga [Kolongo's younger brother] that person is now Kolongo. Njobo is not here, but that person and that person [Manyalibo and Masisi were indicated but not named] are Njobo. Let us all go our own ways and get lots of honey and sing honey songs and dance honey dances, then come back to one camp as before and hunt again."

The immediate bickering was stopped, and everyone agreed loudly that Moké was indeed right. But as it turned out Manyalibo made Moké's speech an excuse for siding with Ekianga in a hunting-honey camp, and a deep rift opened up between the hitherto inseparable cousins, Manyalibo and Masisi. Moké threw his lot in with Ekianga, in an effort to dissuade them from any grosser sacrilege, with exhortations to Masisi to make a good camp and gather lots of honey. Ekianga's eldest sister, her daughter, and Njobo's wife and some of his nephews and nieces joined Masisi, as did a young married nephew of Cephu, Kelemoké. Others joined Tungana, who prudently moved close to the village, where he could, by virtue of his age, claim gifts of food from all the sections and from his village *kpara*.

5. During the honey season, with the band divided into four sections, Masisi and Manyalibo were again at odds. Manyalibo, with Ekianga and Moké and old Tungana, among others, formed a powerful section at the far northern extreme of the territory, and offended Masisi's much smaller section by continuing to hunt. Masisi argued

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year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all the noise[3] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women, Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*,

[3] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or *lolelé* in KiNgwana. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad (*sinama*). This is tantamount to a moral judgment, invoking the supernatural sanctions of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu ndura*), just as it is said to kill the hunt (*akami a mu mukira*).

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wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs, and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masini found the competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women away and, taking a pair of *ngbenghe* himself, joined in the singing.

The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always related to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is another, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value. One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discontent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

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gone there would have been enough beaters. As usual the women were loud in their complaint, and two of the hunters who had stayed behind with their nets now joined the side of Pepei and said that they had not gone because the women made so much noise, all the game was scared away and the hunt would have been empty anyway. Even Cephu had meat (a highly dramatic statement, for Cephu was usually meatless, or considered so), and the neighboring Lesé pygmies had meat, and everyone knew what poor hunters they were. But we were all starving because everyone was lazy.

The discussion went on for about an hour, it being made an excuse to raise all manner of minor sources of discontent. The hunt did not go off again, but in the afternoon there was a big hunting dance, and the next day the women made a special show of setting out, carrying their husbands' nets and spears, at least until they were out of the camp.

9. While many of the disputes concerning food arise out of general shortage or dissatisfaction, usually owing to poor hunting, and are made occasion for bringing up almost any topic, they are more often made occasion for criticizing specific groups. Thus children will find themselves criticized for making too much noise in their playground, or for splashing too loudly in the stream and so frightening the game away. Youths are accused of idling and playing with girls on the fringes of the hunt instead of guarding the edges against escaping game. Women are blamed for being lazy or inefficient as beaters, men for relying too much on women "who have other work to do." Elders are blamed for not keeping the camp quiet while the hunt is away, and always the whole camp is blamed for causing poor hunting by not singing and dancing properly.

There are innumerable petty squabbles over division of food, but these are always settled by those concerned. Never once have I seen such a squabble become an affair for the whole band to discuss. The only cases of disputes concerning food that have centered around specific individuals, and have not been mere expressions of marital disharmony, have concerned hunting "crimes." These are few and far between, and rather than accuse someone of being a poor hunter it is more often just pointed out that his net is always empty. There was one occasion, however, on which Cephu set his net up inside the hunting circle, therefore in a better position to catch the game being driven in by the beaters. A full description of this is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961, Chapter 5). Its essentials are as follows:

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Cephu was neither a very good nor a very popular hunter, and it may be that he was afforded less cooperation by his fellow hunters as a result. Toward the end of a particularly unsuccessful day, Cephu slipped off and set his net up where it would catch the first wave of animals put up by the beat. He was caught with his spoils, however, and when back in camp there was a gathering of all the youths and hunters and elders (except Moké) at the *kumamolimo* (hearth of the *molimo*), to which Cephu was summoned by calling his name across to the small camp he had built for himself. He was named in the most uncomplimentary terms, and when he finally came to defend himself he was subjected to indignities, even by the youths and children. He was openly accused of stealing food from his fellow Mbuti, and this was something only animals did (note that the anger was of the band at someone having stolen from the band; this to the Mbuti is true theft). All manner of other grievances were brought up against Cephu, particularly his lack of participation in the *molimo* for Balekimito, Ekianga's mother, paternal aunt to Manyalibo and Masisi. Cephu responded that Balekimito was not his mother, and this was the trap into which he had been led. By saying this he disclaimed membership of the hearth, and so his theft became more logical but his act even more reprehensible. Finding himself now both a thief and an outsider, Cephu broke down and offered to return all the meat he had caught. The hunters went with him and stripped not only his hut but those of the three other families in Cephu's camp, leaving Cephu complaining that he would die.

That evening, however, Masisi slipped over in the dark with a peace offering of cooked food[4] and not long afterward Cephu made his way to the *kumamolimo* and joined in the singing for his "mother," Balekimito. This was one of the very rare occasions when a dispute was ended by what might be considered as direct retributive and punitive action by the band.

10. This is not to say that theft of food never takes place. It would be a rare Mbuti woman who did not conceal a portion of the catch in case she was forced to share with others, and occasionally a bachelor like Pepei, with a reputation for being somewhat *wazi-wazi*, was caught stealing a small quantity of food from a cooking pot or from

[4] Prestation is an important though unformalized part of Mbuti life, and a major means of establishing social relationships. Any property except the most personal items, such as used bark cloth, bows and spears, are likely to change hands, and even these personal items may be offered or sought.

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11. Sau was the mother of Amabosu, who had exchanged sisters with Ekianga. Sau was regarded by the villagers as a dangerous witch, a role she filled with zeal and which the Mbuti found useful in two ways. It provided them with a scapegoat in the forest just as it was a handy excuse for any misadventure in the village. In either situation the latent dramatic possibilities appealed enormously to the old lady's histrionic susceptibilities. One day Sau asked the wife of Mbaaka, a nephew of Njobo, for some food. She was refused. That night she did a little dance in front of Mbaaka's hut, her usual way of showing her displeasure. The next day, on the hunt, Masisi's son was about to run in bare-handed to catch a sharp-toothed *sindula* (chevrotain), but Amabosu persuaded him to take his spear. He did so, and then collided with Mbaaka, spearing him in the side.

There was actually some bad feeling between Amabosu and Mbaaka, and in case this was brought up (making it seem that Amabosu had deliberately caused his injury) the discussion of the incident was quickly turned to the refusal of Mbaaka's wife to give Sau food. She thus became the prime target for blame, with Sau acting as a secondary scapegoat, being criticized for dancing her "bad dance" outside Mbaaka's hut. In case anyone should take it too seriously, Manyalibo promptly started making fun of Sau's dance, flapping his hands to imitate Sau's pendent breasts. This was taken up by the children, who would not be content until Sau herself gave a demonstration.

That evening several hunters stood in midcamp[6] and said what a good camp it was, and commented on the good hunting. No further word was said about the spearing, except in the village, where the respective *kpara* went to the tribunal to effect reconciliation (between themselves) and blood payment. Amabosu's *kpara* agreed to pay sixty francs to Mbaaka's *kpara*, Masisi's *kpara* paying only forty. This news caused great hilarity in the camp, and the comment that villagers were animals, always "eating" each other. Between the Mbuti themselves I could find no evidence of blood payment of any kind, though any incident involving the drawing of blood is bound to provoke discus-

failure to share in time of need is considered a far greater crime than is petty (i.e., individual) theft.

[6] The importance of the "midcamp" position is that it defines the viewpoint of the person talking. An individual talking from his own hearth talks as an individual. If he talks from midcamp he is taking a band rather than an individual point of view. Similarly the *kumamolimo* is central, but more restricted in area and viewpoint, being used as a vantage point to discuss with the whole band matters pertaining to the *molimo*.

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sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domestic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty. He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[7] She told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying

[7] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself.

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765 593 578 the food for the festivities, but nobody was helping him. At this point, instead of naming his wife, he named another sister, living in the same camp, and said that she had not done her part. He added, as an afterthought, that his own wife was equally responsible, and stepped down.

765 • 626 593 Moké took his place and began a long harangue, telling the camp that the *molimo* was nothing to play with, that it was big and it was dangerous, and it could kill you. He pointed out that there had been no singing for two days and two nights, because of rain, and that indeed the *molimo* had become empty. The men should have built a hut for the *molimo*. But even so it was bad for Baumbao to take down the baskets. These should have been kept full; an empty *molimo* basket is bad for the forest. Moké then turned to Baumbao and said, "Your wife is one of us, she belongs to this hearth; it is for you to see that she keeps the basket full." Baumbao then stalked off in a temper, and Eyalo, his sister's husband, said that Baumbao never dreamed of anything but his wife's bad cooking and the whole *molimo* was empty and he was not going to contribute to an empty *molimo*, nor was his wife.

Moké replied, "Empty or not empty, that is the *molimo* hearth and it has to be looked after as long as it is there." He left, and a number of youths began to restore the sticks that had held the baskets, and then carried the baskets around from hut to hut, collecting offerings from each one. That night there was some singing, and for the next few nights. Then the festival was brought to an end. It was noticeable, however, that Tabakali was constantly being helped by her youngest sister-in-law both in collecting food for the *molimo* basket, and in cooking it.

DISPUTES CONCERNING SEX

834 578 13. There is a great deal of latitude in any Mbuti band on the sexual behavior of its members, but there are certain things that are known to cause offense. One is the playing with the private parts of a woman in front of her kin or her husband. One morning the camp clown, Matungi, was playing in this manner with Kengé's half sister, married to Kokoyo and mother of two children. Kengé was nearby and took great offense, and said that if Matungi wanted to play with the girl elsewhere that was all right, but not in front of her brother. Matungi replied by becoming even more intimate, whereupon

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A recently married Mbuti girl, while in the village, slept with a villager. On returning to the hunting camp the first youth she met (Pepei, totally unrelated) beat her up severely, throwing her to the ground, holding her by one arm and kicking her. Nobody intervened, even her parents, and not a word was said about the incident.

That evening Pepei complained to the camp that no girls would sleep with him because he was an orphan, but when he began to make allusions indicating that this was one reason why he beat up the girl, Moké broke in and said that the only reason girls didn't sleep with Pepei was that he was so old. He was about nineteen.

18. It is seldom that within a camp a girl will go after one of the married men as blatantly as did Biyokenama, one of Tungana's daughters. Moreover, Biyokenama's father was distantly related to Manisi, the father of her lover, Ageronga. One morning she went so far as to follow Ageronga down to the section of the stream where the men bathed, taking off her cloth as she went. Ageronga's wife, Ambelema, a husky maiden, went in pursuit, hurling abuse. Biyokenama was heard yelling that Ambelema had no business suggesting such dreadful things; how could anyone think that she, Biyo, would flirt with her "brother"? But Ambelema had seen enough and began fighting. Tough as she was, she lost three teeth and came running back to the camp in tears. Biyokenama prudently took off for the village.

Everyone waited for Ageronga, who eventually came wandering in and went up to Biyokenama's mother and said he wanted three hundred francs, one for each tooth her daughter had taken from his wife. He said Biyokenama followed him without reason, that he wanted nothing to do with her, that she was a nuisance. Nobody believed this, but it was clearly a statement of loyalty, and sympathy swung to his side. It was agreed, in a discussion in which mainly youths took part, that Ambelema should not have said such dreadful things to Biyokenama, that even if true they were better not said; but the blame was more firmly placed on Biyokenama, and her mother was urged to take better care of her in future.

19. Marital disputes that are overheard but not deliberately forced on the attention of the band are ignored for the most part. If they are noisy and keep people awake, there may be complaints or there may be some ridicule. Certainly a fight going on between husband and wife inside a hut is followed with zest by all the youths and some of the younger married couples. These may even stand around watching

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the hut shake, ready to catch whoever comes flying out first and prevent further damage.

Sometimes after such a squabble the young man and wife will equally loudly make up, so that everyone can hear, and will then emerge from the hut hand in hand and walk up and down the camp in ostentatious amity. This is considered a very good thing.

The custom of sister exchange, and the lack of any system of patrilocal residence, however, lead to conflicts of loyalties, and brothers or sisters find themselves drawn into disputes that are not strictly theirs. Ekianga was the cause of one such situation that continued for months, manifesting itself in a whole series of apparently unrelated disputes.

He had three wives, the youngest of which, Kamaikan, was the sister of Amabosu. Amabosu's wife, Amaloku, was in turn Ekianga's sister. Kamaikan was not only the youngest of the wives but by far the prettiest, and Ekianga ignored his marital obligations to the other two wives, even to the point of retaining favored portions of the game for Kamaikan. And only with Kamaikan would he sleep.

The other two wives responded in different ways. The oldest, Arobanai, ostentatiously built her own house and did nothing for Ekianga's. She said she was finished with her husband; if he wouldn't sleep with her she would sleep with his child. She phrased this in a way that made it sound rather incestuous as a form of insult, but everyone agreed that it was good for her to keep herself and her children out of Ekianga's hut.

Loku, the middle wife, had no children, and she retaliated simply by occasionally going off to join another band and letting it be known that she was available for temporary liaisons, owing to her husband's incapacity. This again was a blow at Ekianga's vital spot, his pride. But still he slept on with Kamaikan.

When Kamaikan became pregnant, Loku and Arobanai both rejoined Ekianga, thinking this was surely their chance. But when a boy was born, Ekianga still showed no signs of changing his ways. Arobanai brought her complaint to the band by striding up and down the camp listing all her grievances against her husband, one after the other. Moké came out and agreed that it was bad but that it was something that should be settled by them, and not made an issue for everyone else. But Amabosu now felt he had to intervene, and he sided with Arobanai, saying that Ekianga was doing a bad and dangerous thing continuing to sleep with Kamaikan. Everyone agreed

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Everyone agreed that after giving birth a woman should be left alone for a while, and that her belly should not become big again until her child became big.

One of the many fights that occurred because of this relationship is described in *The Forest People* (Turnbull, 1961), at the end of Chapter 6. There it is seen that Amabosu sided with his sister, and consequently shared what everyone agreed was at least partly her guilt. Arobanai and Amabosu's mother, Sau, were the two who intervened to stop the fight when it began to get beyond bounds.

Amabosu, who intervened to help his sister, now found himself associated with her in her obstinate disregard of public opinion, so he ignored her and contented himself with continuing, from time to time, to make uncomplimentary remarks about her husband. This created a strain between Amabosu and his wife, Ekianga's sister, and while Sau became the protectress of her daughter-in-law, Arobanai became the protectress of her young co-wife.

One night Arobanai grumbled loud and long throughout the small hours until, about an hour before dawn, she came out into midcamp and woke everyone up with a torrent of abuse that was delivered with such vigor and evident sincerity that men came tumbling out of their huts holding their spears, ready for a large-scale fight. Arobanai had named just about everyone in the camp for some kind of offense, all of which contributed, she said, to Ekianga's delinquency. To emphasize her points she clapped her hands each time and pointed. Masisi tried to quiet her down by imitating her and laughing at her, but all but a few were too sleepy to see much humor in the situation, and when he saw he was not achieving anything he abruptly told Arobanai to "close her teeth" and then walked away. Ekianga came out of his hut and also quietly tried to pacify his irate wife, but was equally unsuccessful. Others tried similarly and made equally little impression. Sleep was impossible, and everyone sat around huddled over their family hearth, cold and miserable, listening to the still undiminished flow of invective. Occasionally a finely turned phrase brought some nervous laughter, but on the whole Arobanai was not going after dramatic effect, she was merely cataloguing all the disturbances of the past few months and laying them at her husband's door. After over an hour of nonstop tirade Arobanai began to wind up her argument with an indictment of both Kamaikan and Amabosu. Kamaikan could have resisted Ekianga's attentions, she said, and she added that she had resisted them often enough herself. But Kamaikan

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had either given in or had actually encouraged Ekianga, and Amabosu had supported her. This brought a mild cry of protest from Amabosu, and hearing it Arobanai rounded on him and asked him whether or not he was an Mbuti, for he had not behaved like one. What did it matter whether he was out of the same stomach as Kamaikan or not, were they not all *apusi* (the term of friendship that covers brothers, sisters and age mates)? And was it not more important whether something was right or wrong than whose stomach who came from?

Finding this an unexpectedly dramatic declaration, and one which made Moké visibly sit up, and almost certainly feeling somewhat fatigued, Arobanai suddenly stopped and brightly said that she was going to get some sleep, the rest could do as they pleased. As she strode into her hut Moké came over and stirred at the central fire. Not addressing anyone in particular he said that this thing had gone on long enough, and that he did not want to hear another word about it. He said that if disputes continued they would kill the camp completely and absolutely, that the forest would refuse to accept the band and would send all its hunts back empty. And what Ekianga did was a matter for him to think about, for if he continued sleeping with Kamaikan it would almost certainly kill their child, and that would again displease the forest. He ended by saying, still staring carefully at the fire, "It is no longer a matter for us, it is a matter for the forest."

20. A month or so later Kamaikan's young son became ill. Arobanai was not in the camp at the time, but Loku was. Nobody mentioned Moké's warning that the boy would become ill if Ekianga continued sleeping with Kamaikan (as he did), and Amabosu was shouted down when he appeared about to say something to this effect. He changed his mind and went over to Loku, and said that she was to blame; she would have to cure the child by cicatrizing it. In the village this is tantamount to an accusation of sorcery, cicatrization being an admission of unknowing guilt by which the accused at the same time absolves himself and does all that is possible to negate the curse. The Mbuti know the belief and the custom, and sometimes, as in a case like this, they follow the custom without following the belief. Loku put up the expected resistance to the idea, and Amabosu chased her with a stick. The youths and hunters followed the show with enjoyment, and Manyalibo made jokes about nobody daring to come near him because he was the biggest sorcerer of all. Eventually Loku

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29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

30. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had Moké not taken the *banja* sticks and started beating them, a sign for the *molimo* singing to begin.

31. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was dancing vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying. Nobody interfered.

32. Amabosu, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Amabosu, fed by his mother, paid no attention.

33. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight between the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action of the *molimo* in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious case that was never settled.

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attempt is made to settle the issue in question one way or the other, even verbally, and the equally small number in which direct action is taken. The percentages are given as follows:

DISPUTE	*Number Recorded*	*Number of Decisions or Judgments made*	*Instances of Positive Action*
Food	67	5 (7.5%)	4 (5.9%)
Sex	37	4 (10.8%)	5 (13.5%)
Village	11	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Theft	5	3 (60%)	
Territory	4		3 (75%)

These figures indicate the greatest degree of decision, either by the passing of opinions (judgments) or by the taking of action, in the least frequent types of dispute.

In the most common disputes of all, those arising out of trivia and having no particular direction and no specific purpose, it is only about one in a hundred that comes to a head in a way that calls for action or decision, such as the case of the two brothers (34). Such disputes gave frequent opportunity for the voicing of opinions on almost any matter, and acted as a mechanism by which most incipient disputes of a more serious nature were detected and aired before they grew to major proportions.

An examination of all the recorded disputes shows that without a doubt there are forces working toward order in Mbuti society, despite its unformalized nature and the absence of political or legal "systems." Such forces include the compelling demands of the stomach, which suffers directly from any dispute that interrupts the hunting and gathering economy, as any major dispute will; the weight of public opinion, expressed verbally, or through ridicule or mime, or in action such as thrashing (rare, and only for youths) or ostracism and exile. These are the negative forces against antisocial behavior. There are equally positive forces toward social behavior, including the esteem of one's age mates and elders, the affection of children, the contentment of a full stomach and, perhaps above all, the belief in the personal benevolence of the forest.[10] The positive aspect of the

[10] Fortune (1935) describes a parallel situation among the Manus, who, like the Mbuti, respect morality beyond the pressures of social sanctions. Fortune claims that the religious sanctions provide a socially established way of keeping the social sentiment "quick," and of bringing offenders to book without seeming to be personal. The latter aspect of religious sanctions is probably more vital for the Mbuti, where any dispute is

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forest as an incentive toward good behavior is far more important and far more strong than its negative aspect as a deterrent against bad behavior.

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likely to be highly disruptive but where disputes nonetheless occur. Any personal intervention or judgment would only be likely to lead to further disputes. The impersonal nature of the forest as arbitrator and judge maintains the impersonality of the laws; or if the forest is considered as endowed with personality, it is a spiritual personality and owes no more allegiance to one Mbuti than to another, and so is still impersonal in this context.

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the power believed in. There is not a solitary instance to show the belief in a malevolent power against which protection must be sought. This is plainly different from village magic, which is essentially pragmatic and not in any way related to a central value system. We showed earlier (pp. 53–62) how magic does not provide a means by which the villagers can control the Mbuti. By a comparison of the two systems of magic we can see in effect how clearly they indicate major value differences despite initial outward similarities. In particular, the Mbuti attitude to the forest as a benevolent central value in their lives can be seen, and while in village magic we see only the lack of such a central value, when we examine witchcraft and sorcery we see its exact polar opposite.

And it will be remembered how (pp. 57–59) the Mbuti recognize the difference in attitudes toward magic, and put it to good use. The villagers regard Mbuti culture as impoverished in all respects, and the lack of the magic so abundant in village life is part of their argument. In making this lack of magic an excuse for the allegedly poor hunting that has deprived their *kpara* of meat, the Mbuti turn the situation nicely to their advantage, and turn the argument of the villagers against them. Thus although village magic and forest magic are different and distinct, the areas overlap in such a way as to deepen the opposition between the two worlds.

WITCHCRAFT

With witchcraft the situation is different, for this is something peculiar to the village world. Earlier (pp. 59–60) we showed some of the ways in which village witchcraft (often confused by the Mbuti with sorcery) impinges on forest life. Again, the villagers regard the lack of witchcraft in Mbuti culture as a sign of cultural poverty, and in their own belief in the power of witchcraft they seek to use it in their constant struggle to impose some kind of control over the hunters. However, the Mbuti again make use of the village belief in witchcraft for their own ends, using it as a means of escape from situations in which they would otherwise be culpable and stand to lose a good exchange relationship.

In their own forest world, however, witchcraft plays no part, except insofar as it is recognized as a useful device for deflecting blame, and is thus occasionally used, tongue in cheek, to resolve a dispute. As indicated in the foregoing chapter, the prime objective in the settle-

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ment of a dispute is to avoid attaching blame to one individual or another, for this would result in a rift in the band. The blame has to be either deflected or dissipated, and the village notion of witchcraft is sometimes used to this end.

In the prolonged dispute over Ekianga and his three wives, the situation was aggravated by having, in the same band, Ekianga's brother-in-law, Amabosu, with whom he had exchanged sisters, and Amabosu's mother, old Sau. Sau made an ideal scapegoat, conforming to the village notions of what a witch should look like, and her role at times became rather like that of the camp clown. She would be accused of dancing outside people's huts in the middle of the night, and on one occasion she was distinctly heard to mutter in an exasperated voice, "Do they expect me to urinate inside my hut?"—for she had indeed emerged in the middle of the night to answer a call of nature. Nonetheless, on that occasion she rose to the needs of the moment and agreed that she had been dancing because she had been made to dance, and she was not responsible, and she was sorry for any harm she had done.

However, she was a major and active peacemaker in the family squabble, actively intervening to prevent Ekianga and Amabosu from fighting, and equally actively looking after the children of all the wives involved, passing them from one to the other and in this way helping to preserve reasonable relationships at least between her daughter and her son's wife.

All the more in the village was Sau used as a scapegoat. But whereas in the forest the scapegoat, even if the clown, feels the full weight of the blame he takes upon himself and may suffer some unpopularity, though temporary, in the village there is no such disadvantage, and old Sau played her role with zest. At a time when there were an unusual number of deaths through stomach disorders contracted in the village, the Mbuti were sharply criticized by the villagers for allowing this to happen and not taking the proper protective measures. It was plainly witchcraft, if not sorcery, and it was their duty to find the witch and have the necessary purification. An elaborate witch-hunt was held in the village, and of course Sau was finally "divined" and dragged out of her hut—where, at the time, she was dozing—complaining about all the noise.

Emerging into the center of the village she made all the usual protests, and performed the usual trick of stabbing herself with a knife, but holding it carefully so that it just nicked the skin sufficiently to

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P 754 754 #177 554 draw impressive-looking streaks of blood. She was promptly stopped from "killing" herself, having it explained to her that she was only a witch and could not really help what she had done, and only had to purify herself.

C 754 563 P #177 754 554 761 However, the deaths continued and nobody else was willing to take Sau's role, and in the end there was no alternative but to accuse her of sorcery. In village belief, witchcraft substance is normally dormant but may become activated through a number of causes. A witch is a person who possesses this substance but has no control over it. Once discovered, the witch is under an obligation to keep the substance "cool." Sau obviously was not keeping hers cool, and it is said that if very bad people know they are possessed of witchcraft substance they may learn how to control it deliberately, and they then become sorcerers. Sau, then, was accused of deliberate and malevolent use of her witchcraft substance. She was formally condemned to be beaten P [683] to death. The Mbuti made a show of beating her but then stopped, telling the villagers that they did not want to kill her as then they would only have her spirit to deal with (using another purely village concept), which would be much more difficult to control. Exile was suggested instead, and Sau was duly exiled, and departed for her own village in great spirits, laden down with foodstuffs.

P #177 761 754 62 166 554 The deaths had caused the band, which originally had been gathered in the village for a wedding, to depart abruptly for the forest as soon as the Sau incident was over. It took a number of days to prepare themselves, taking fond farewells of their exchange partners, and Ekianga went ahead with three other hunters and their families to select the site. When the rest arrived they found Ekianga comfortably installed, with the sorceress, Sau, happily in an adjoining hut looking after his children. Her position in the forest was in no way changed. She remained a scapegoat, but her right to stay with the band was never seriously challenged, nor were the respect and affection with which she was regarded ever diminished.

P #177 554 754 184 The same use of witchcraft was found in other bands, and the same professional scapegoats. The other "witches," like Sau, occasionally made fun of the whole thing by miming all their alleged achievements as witches, including the legendary witch's dance and the casting of the "evil eye." In every case the "witch" occupied an otherwise perfectly normal role in camp life, having no more and no less respect than any other by virtue of being a scapegoat.

P #177 754 [492] [626] In forest life there is no need for witchcraft as a social institution,

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for there are other mechanisms to deal with the situations with which witchcraft, in village life, deals. As indicated, it may play a minor and supplementary role in the dispersal of blame in a dispute, but completely without involving any belief in the actual presence of witchcraft substance. It is highly significant that the concept of supernatural power in this form is utterly foreign to the Mbuti, and this places them in a somewhat disadvantageous position when brought face to face with the village notion of sorcery, and the practice of cursing.

SORCERY

While the Mbuti make limited use of village concepts of magic and witchcraft for their own practical ends, they make no such use of sorcery, having for it a complete abhorrence. The villagers themselves never admit to being sorcerers, for sorcery is by definition antisocial and evil, but they may use the threat of sorcery (pp. 60–62) and claim to have employed a sorcerer against the Mbuti. More likely still, they may seek the aid of the local doctor to effect a curse against the Mbuti for nonfulfillment of their side of a bargain.

From the village point of view there is a world of difference between a sorcerer's curse and a doctor's curse, but from the Mbuti point of view they are one and the same thing. The theoretical and institutional aspects of magic and witchcraft the Mbuti can appreciate and turn to their advantage. Confronted with sorcery they have no recourse but flight. Flight in itself is significant, for it is flight away from the village into the forest or, if already in the forest, then it is flight further into the forest. On the whole it is a firm belief that sorcery is ineffective outside the village, but sometimes circumstances (such as poison) combine to indicate otherwise, and then it becomes a question of proximity to the village. Once again, however, as with magic, we find the Mbuti regarding the forest as a place of refuge, a place where they are sure of protection.

Against witchcraft, all the Mbuti have to do is to acknowledge being witches and go through the necessary purifications; the belief never touches them. Against sorcery, apart from flight, they have no means of defense for there is no counterpart in their experience. Sorcery implies the use of supernatural powers to effect harm on someone. Two concepts are involved that are foreign to the Mbuti: one is that a supernatural power can be used for anything but the social good, and the second is that anyone could wish, anonymously as it

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THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry
752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many
757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the
[224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If
[75] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or
718 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire
796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest
533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the
[782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not
[533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*,
[535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and
[765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although
[626] there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

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patterns produce "features typical of the patrilineal band," for the patterns differ from group to group, and within each group from one time of the year to the next. At one time or another, each group, net-hunters or archers, will be able to present bands that resemble patrilineal units; at other times the same bands will be utterly nonlineal, even though the exploitative pattern may not have changed.

Nonetheless, the environment itself does play a vital structural role, and while not necessarily determining the exploitative activity, or the dependence of the Mbuti upon it, is determinant of their value system so long as that dependence is felt. For, feeling that way, regarding the forest as *ema* the provider, and as *eba* the ruler, believing that any deviation from the way of life ordained for them by the forest would be fatal, the Mbuti effect what control they can over their lives by a constant effort to "rejoice the forest."

Conceiving that the forest is intelligent, the Mbuti conceive that it is like them, and consequently the ideal that they hold for themselves is the ideal they attribute to the forest. While age and territory are effective in organizing the band, dividing it into significant units, binding it together as a whole, and determining the general nature of interpersonal relationships, the territory enlarged into the forest seen as mother and father acts as the ultimate sanction of all behavior. There are certain recognized forms of behavior that lead to a "good" band, and others that lead to a "bad" band. The appropriate positive and negative sanctions are formulated in such a way that all actions are either pleasing to the forest—leading to the ideal of *ekimi*, or quietness—or displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami*, or noise. (*Ekimi* and *akami* are, in practice, essential elements in determining the success or failure of the hunt.)

Thus it is recognized that cooperation is essential for the success of the hunt, so it is stated that laziness and aggressiveness and disputatiousness are all displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami* (as indeed they do). The *akami* is their own reward, for *akami* destroys the hunt and "kills" the Mbuti. On the contrary, to hunt well, to have a full stomach, to sing and dance, is to please the forest and lead to *ekimi*, or "quietness," and *ekimi* in turn brings good hunting, and is associated with singing and dancing and feasting.

Here is a very clear example of the closest possible association between religious belief and ethical behavior. The distinction made by Radcliffe-Brown (1952, p. 172) between law, morality and religion, upheld by legal sanctions, sanctions of public opinion, and religious

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sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experience it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akami*, which kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the obvious practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of organization must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself, for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total absence of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforcement, through musical technique, of the values of age and cooperation, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of religious ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recreation of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased. Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

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the camp or on the hunt, and they also sometimes shout at a storm or at rain to drive away bad weather.

But more important than Mbuti recognition of the practical power of noise is their recognition of its social value. When they say it is the duty of the hunter age level to make noise, they mean just that, even though it is precisely noise that will negate the hunter's other duty, to hunt. The Mbuti do not connect the two duties—the one refers to the hunt, the other to camp life. It is in the camp that the hunter is expected to make noise; that is, to be disputatious. For the countervalue, *ekimi*, is only "quiet" and does not refer to silence (*kobinengo*), which is considered as an indication of great and imminent danger. A silent camp is considered a bad camp and the badness is destroyed by destroying the silence, which can be done in two ways. One is by singing, which is recognized as sound but only described as noise when it takes place in the village. Singing, as we have seen, is essentially a form of communication, even of communion, with the benevolent forest divinity. It destroys silence and "rejoices the forest" at the same time. But this is recognized as having only temporary efficacy. To strike at the roots of silence, one employs "noise" in the sense of argument, which is certainly its most common connotation.

Silence in a camp betokens unusual ill humor, which is common among the Mbuti when in their village camp, but not in the forest (except when the hunt is spoiled by rain). Disputes seldom remain hidden for long because of the intimate nature of camp life, but any length of time is too long, and when a camp is silent it is invariably the hunters who find some cause for "making noise." It matters little what they pick on, but it is preferably not the underlying dispute causing the silence. It may be directed at the cause if personal feelings run high, but then the hunters are criticized for making too much noise, *akami ndasi*. Youths and elders will alike shout at the hunters and tell them this, but the noise will not die down until the disputants have either come into the open with their dispute, putting it before the band, or have been forced to join together in some common but unrelated cause.

Thus there was an occasion on which Amabosu, for no evident reason, took to beating his wife, Amaloku, with unwonted vigor and regularity. A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back. But Amaloku was aware of the real reason for her husband's behavior, which was her own brother's

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593 578 persistence in sleeping with Amabosu's sister despite her having just given birth to a child. She evidently felt shame for her brother, but whatever the reason she did not fight back. This only enraged Amabosu further so that his beatings grew to the point where Amaloku was bruised and lame and perpetually in tears. After a week of this 593 578 622 the band was well aware of the underlying cause, but it was nonetheless concerned for the restoration of good relations between Amabosu and his wife. Being outwardly a domestic squabble, nobody interfered, and the camp was silent. The silence was very real, as it can be when the Mbuti get moody, and it settled on the whole camp the moment each beating began. Masisi tried to create minor disputes about hunting, in the hope that Amabosu and his wife would join in, but they were not to be drawn so easily. Even when one very real [685] dispute raged beside them (Pepei having stolen some meat from Sau, Amabosu's mother) they maintained a sullen silence that overcame the band as soon as Pepei had been dealt with by a sound beating.

It was not until Amaloku, in an effort to run away from Amabosu, tripped and fell by Tungana's hearth that the camp had its chance. [252] As she tripped, Amaloku scattered several logs from the fire, upsetting a piece of meat that had been roasting over the coals, casting it into the ashes. Old Tungana let out a yell and his wife slapped Amaloku hard. Amaloku wailed as she had never wailed before, whereupon Masisi and Manyalibo, both great hunters, went to the middle of the camp and jointly denounced Amaloku as a troublesome girl who should be sent back to her people. She had been badly taught, be- [372] cause no Mbuti ever treats fire like that, or throws food into fire. She was no good as a daughter, no good in camp, and evidently no good in bed because she was still without child.

This utterly unjustified and personal attack brought out not only Amabosu but also Ekianga (Amaloku's brother, the basic cause of all the trouble) in common defense of the weeping girl. Masisi and [372] Manyalibo put up a good argument, for it was indeed considered bad to accidentally step into a fire, and the camp was soon in an uproar with the sister-exchange section uniting in defense, supported largely by the youths. The hunters, with the exception of Ekianga and Amabosu themselves, allied with Masisi and Manyalibo. Finally old [198] Tungana stopped everything by whistling and then making one of his [186] rare speeches. It was to the effect that everyone was behaving like villagers, so he might as well go to the village and stay there. He called to his wife to pack her things, and grumbling loudly he grabbed his

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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bow and arrows and started to walk out of the camp. His son Makubasi, one of the hunters, called after him that he was going "emptily" (*ue ke bulé*)—using the KiNgwana word for "emptily," with its connotations of war—(See footnote to p. 295) and without reason. Makubasi pointed out that all the noise had ceased and that now there was *ekimi*, or quiet. Tungana stopped, listened, said that he did not want to kill the camp so he would come back, but from now on there must be nothing but *ekimi* and no more jumping in and out of his hearth, spoiling his food, destroying his fire.

Ekianga continued to sleep with Amabosu's sister, but Amabosu no longer beat Ekianga's sister in retaliation. On the contrary, even before Tungana's grumbling protests had died down, he was off getting some herbs to soothe his wife's wounds. And if the camp had been upset by noise rather than silence, the hunters would have killed it with more noise. The ultimate solution generally lies in the hands of the elders, but the process of restoring equilibrium is initiated by the hunters' fulfilling their duty of making noise. Thus though noise cannot be said to be good, its use (properly controlled) is recognized as having beneficial potentialities.

5. QUIET (*ekimi*) is not merely the opposite of noise; it is something else and it is the ultimate goal toward which life is directed. As with noise, its practical advantages are plain, particularly on the hunt. It is also recognized as an indication that all is well; a quiet camp is a camp untroubled by dissension, a quiet child is a well-fed child, and so forth. In the same way that noise is associated with heat, so is quiet associated with coolness, and this is generally a desirable quality, whereas heat is undesirable.[8] The plaintive cry of the elders when trying to stop an argument or settle a dispute is often "*Me oki akami, me toni akami; me kondi ekimi, ndura ekondi ekimi*" —"I hear noise, I refuse noise; I love quiet, the forest loves quiet."

The ideal is quiet, and quietness is associated with the forest. The concept is inseparable from the concept of joy, which is *ekimi mota*, or "powerful quietness." Joy is an intensification of quietness and is brought about by the occurrence of the norm: good hunting, good weather, good health, harmonious relations, plenty of children. These conditions do not always prevail, in which case active steps have to be taken to improve the hunt, to be less disputatious, to keep better health, to have more children, and to drive bad weather away. En-

[8] The village is in fact, as in thought, hot and noisy, whereas the forest is cool and quiet.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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with excessive vigor. It would be an insult as well as *mbafu* (stupidity) to take all the trouble to rejoice the forest by song and then displease it by not having a particularly vigorous hunt. A month of this leaves the stoutest Mbuti more than a little tired, so although the remedy for *akami* lies in their hands, through song, at all times, it can be arduous and, since it is *mota*, it can be dangerous. Thus the supernatural sanction on social behavior is in no way lessened: the Mbuti all state that the forest, in its manifestation through the morning *molimo*, may punish and kill.

The system as described can be seen easily enough to maintain internal order, and it can also be seen well enough how it operates, as an essentially forest-centered system based on age and forest values, to maintain separation from a village system based on kinship and anti-forest values—for one of the cardinal village beliefs is not simply that the village is better than the forest, but that the forest is the source of all evil. But now we have to see how these same elements that make for social order in the forest (the nonlineal band, age, territory, noise and song) operate within the village framework.

Winter (1956) describes the relationship between the eastern extension of the Mbuti, the few who live among the Amba on the Uganda/Congo border, and the Amba themselves. Each group denigrates the other's mode of existence, yet they evidently live in the closest association with each other, in what Winter calls symbiosis. More important, he describes how two Mbuti groups are fitted into the Amba lineage structure, but only partially so. They are both attached to Bulibuli lineages, each to a maximal lineage as a whole; yet they do not share full and equivalent relationships as Bulibuli with the other lineages of the same clan. Winter mentions that they stand in a joking relationship with only one of the maximal lineages.

Joking relationships are generally thought of as pertaining between individuals who stand in a specific relationship to each other, involving both proximity and distance. The proximity is thought of in terms of kinship, the distance is due to a difference, if not a conflict, of interests. The relationship can involve considerable amity and mutual cooperation, but nonetheless contain elements of hostility, particularly in its outer expression (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 91). The exact formularization varies from situation to situation, tolerating or compelling joking behavior, on a symmetrical or asymmetrical basis.

The essential elements of this form of relationship are all present

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(empty), *mbafu* (stupid) and *mota* (in the sense of dangerous) as assessments of all village institutions and beliefs. A certain amount of this ridicule is again a part of the joking relationship, but it is significant that the Mbuti do not frequently accuse the villagers of being *sinana*, "bad," however much they might refer to the village itself as a "bad place." From the forest standpoint, however, there is no question but that the village system is singularly inapplicable, and therefore at least *bulé* (empty) and possibly *mbafu* (stupid), if not actually *mota*, or dangerous. The village does become *mota*, and very much so, the moment it impinges upon the forest, and any villager in this situation becomes truly *sinana*, or bad. But as seen, in forest life even *akami* can be turned to good use, and the noise of village life, while in itself definitely not good, can be turned to advantage. In the same way that *akami* is the duty of hunters in the forest, as a means of resolving disputes, or at least bringing them into the open, so may *akami* in the village be used as an institutionalized means of resolving a dispute without settling the blame on any single Mbuti. Thus individual villagers, village demands, or village allegations of witchcraft or sorcery can all be invoked to explain what could otherwise only be explained by Mbuti delinquency. Individuals or families who are under criticism, openly or covertly, may decide to go to the village to fulfill some obligations to village *karé* or *kpara*. The village generally is a place for relief from the tensions of forest life, and by bringing their *akami* to this center of *akami* the Mbuti often hope to shed their own internal dissensions. The village is associated with "war" (*vita*).[8]

In the sense of constant interpersonal conflicts, there is no doubt that for whatever reason an Mbuti band reassembles after a stay in a village, it is likely to reunite in the forest with considerably more *ekimi* than it possessed on leaving. In the same way that individuals leave a forest camp for a visit to the village because of *akami* (probably of their own making), so whole bands move to the village when

[8] *Vita* is, strictly speaking, a KiNgwana word, but is invariably used by these Mbuti, as are some other words of the same language, even when speaking in KiBira. A future study of such usages might reveal significant connotations in Mbuti thought. Certainly the wars still uppermost in the minds of the Mbuti, as of others in this region, are those of the Arab slavers, whose pawns the Ngwana were. Similarly the KiNgwana word *bulé* (empty) is used far more than its KiBira counterpart (*bobo*) when the implication is particularly derogatory. Thus *kelele bulé*, which is all KiNgwana, means empty noise, a phrase that might be used to describe a dispute that has no just cause. If an Mbuti were to refer to a dispute as being *akami bobo*, it would have a similar connotation. However, if he said *akami bulé*, it would no longer describe a merely pointless dispute, but one that is both without just cause and with deliberate hostile intent. In fact the odium of *vita* clings to almost every KiNgwana word, as does that of *mayelé*, or trickery.

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the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and *mota*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while operating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it *is* practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

usually are. Both Manyalibo and his wife were great humorists, and they made use of the powers of ridicule to break up some of the more serious disputes, because there is nothing that upsets a Pygmy more than being laughed at.

The oldest member of the group, a member of the same family though even more distantly related, was old Tungana, who had so many children and grandchildren that neither he nor his wife could remember all their names. Strangely enough, he was a progressive Pygmy, and whereas Manyalibo was constantly decrying the Pygmy plantation in his deep bass voice, Tungana thought it was fine. He also thought living near the village was a good thing as there was so much good food to be had for the stealing. And wasn't stealing easier than hunting? I think the truth was that poor old Tungana was getting too old to follow the hunting band with ease, and he was afraid of being abandoned. In fact, he often remained behind in the village when the rest were far off in the forest, and one of his many sons would come in every few days bringing the old couple gifts of meat and forest fruits.

Moke was another of the elders. He claimed a fictional relationship with Tungana because it made him feel at home, since he had no real relatives in the group other than his own children. Moke was the greatest traditionalist of all, and when the Pygmy plantations were mentioned in front of him he just laughed dryly to himself and smiled his toothless smile, saying he had not tasted any Pygmy bananas yet, but if any grew then he would be glad to eat them.

It was Moke who had come with Kolongo and Njobo to cut the marks on my forehead three years earlier. Kolongo had been as much of a traditionalist as Moke, as indeed were all his family, particularly the wizened old mother, Balekimito, and his oldest sister, Asofalinda, who was now a widow and thoroughly enjoying her freedom. Moke had thought of her as a companion for his old age, but Asofalinda liked life as it was, so Moke was still a widower and she a widow.

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he caught the first of the animals fleeing from the beaters, but he had not been able to retreat before he was discovered.

I had never heard of this happening before, and it was obviously a serious offense. In a small and tightly knit hunting band, survival can be achieved only by the closest co-operation and by an elaborate system of reciprocal obligations which insures that everyone has some share in the day's catch. Some days one gets more than others, but nobody ever goes without. There is, as often as not, a great deal of squabbling over the division of the game, but that is expected, and nobody tries to take what is not his due.

Cephu tried very weakly to say that he had lost touch with the others and was still waiting when he heard the beating begin. It was only then that he had set up his net, where he was. Knowing that nobody believed him, he added that in any case he felt he deserved a better place in the line of nets. After all, was he not an important man, a chief, in fact, of his own band? Manyalibo tugged at Ekianga to sit down, and sitting down himself he said there was obviously no use prolonging the discussion. Cephu was a big chief, and a chief was a villager, for the BaMbuti never have chiefs. And Cephu had his own band, of which he was chief, so let him go with it and hunt elsewhere and be a chief elsewhere. Manyalibo ended a very eloquent speech with *"Pisa me taba"* ("Pass me the tobacco").

Cephu knew he was defeated and humiliated. Alone, his band of four or five families was too small to make an efficient hunting unit. He apologized profusely, reiterated that he really did not know he had set up his net in front of the others, and said that in any case he would hand over all the meat. This settled the matter, and accompanied by most of the group he returned to his little camp and brusquely ordered his wife to hand over the spoils. She had little chance to refuse, as hands were already reaching into her basket and under the leaves of the roof where she had hidden some liver in anticipation of just such a contingency. Even her cooking pot was

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emptied. Then each of the other huts was searched and all the meat taken. Cephu's family protested loudly and Cephu tried hard to cry, but this time it was forced and everyone laughed at him. He clutched his stomach and said he would die; die because he was hungry and his brothers had taken away all his food; die because he was not respected.

The kumamolimo was festive once again, and the camp seemed restored to good spirits. An hour later, when it was dark and fires were flickering outside every hut, there was a great blaze at the central hearth and the men talked about the morrow's hunt. From Cephu's camp came the sound of the old man, still trying hard to cry, moaning about his unfortunate situation, making noises that were meant to indicate hunger. From our own camp came the jeers of women, ridiculing him and imitating his moans.

When Masisi had finished his meal he took a pot full of meat with mushroom sauce, cooked by his wife, and quietly slipped away into the shadows in the direction of his unhappy kinsman. The moaning stopped, and when the evening molimo singing was at its height I saw Cephu in our midst. Like most of us he was sitting on the ground, in the manner of an animal. But he was singing, and that meant that he was just as much a BaMbuti as anyone else.

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6

The Giver of the Law

CEPHU HAD COMMITTED what is probably one of the most heinous crimes in Pygmy eyes, and one that rarely occurs. Yet the case was settled simply and effectively, without any evident legal system being brought into force. It cannot be said that Cephu went unpunished, because for those few hours when nobody would speak to him he must have suffered the equivalent of as many days solitary confinement for anyone else. To have been refused a chair by a mere youth, not even one of the great hunters; to have been laughed at by women and children; to have been ignored by men—none of these things would be quickly forgotten. Without any formal process of

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law Cephu had been firmly put in his place, and it was unlikely he would do the same thing again in a hurry.

181 This was typical of all Pygmy life, on the surface at least. There was a confusing, seductive informality about everything they did. [157] Whether it was a birth, a wedding, or a funeral, in a Pygmy hunting camp or in a Negro village, there was always an unexpectedly casual, [621] almost carefree attitude. There was, for instance, little apparent spe- [858] cialization; everyone took part in everything. Children had little or no voice in adult affairs, but the only adult activities from which they seemed to be rigidly excluded were certain songs, and of course the [462] molimo. Between men and women there was also a certain degree of specialization, but little that could be called exclusive.

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There were no chiefs, no formal councils. In each aspect of Pygmy life there might be one or two men or women who were more prominent than others, but usually for good practical reasons. This showed up most clearly of all in the settling of disputes. There was no judge, [69] no jury, no court. The Negro tribes all around had their tribunals, but not the Pygmies. Each dispute was settled as it arose, according to its nature.

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Roughly, there were four ways of punishing offenses, each operating as an efficient deterrent but without necessitating any system of outright punishment. In a small and co-operative group no individual would want the job either of passing judgment or of administering punishment, so like everything else in Pygmy life the maintenance of law was a co-operative affair. Certain offenses, rarely committed, were considered so terrible that they would of themselves bring some form of supernatural retribution. Others became the affair of the molimo, which in its morning rampages showed public disapproval by attacking the hut of the culprit, possibly the culprit himself. Both these types of crime were extremely rare. The more serious of the [685] other crimes, such as theft, were dealt with by a sound thrashing which was administered co-operatively by all who felt inclined to

happened. All the youths told me not to worry about Kelemoke, that they were secretly bringing him food in the forest, he was not far away.

Three days later, when the hunt returned in the late afternoon, Kelemoke came wandering idly into the camp behind them, as though he too had been hunting. He looked around cautiously, but nobody said a word or even looked at him. If they ignored him, at least they did not curse him. He came over to the bachelor's fire and sat down. For several minutes the conversation continued as though he were not there. I saw his face twitching, but he was too proud to speak first. Then a small child was sent over by her mother with a bowl of food, which she put in Kelemoke's hands and gave him a shy, friendly smile.

Kelemoke never flirted with his cousin again, and now, five years later, he is happily married and has two fine children. He does not have leprosy, and he is one of the best liked and most respected of the hunters.

I have never heard of anyone being completely ostracized, but the threat is always there, and is usually sufficient to insure good behavior. The two attitudes which disturb the Pygmy most are contempt and ridicule. Contempt is most effectively shown by ignoring someone, even if he comes and sits at the same fire. But it is difficult to maintain for long because hunters cannot afford to ignore a fellow hunter. So ostracism of this kind is infrequent and does not last. Almost as effective, and of much longer duration, is ridicule. The BaMbuti are good-natured people with an irresistible sense of humor; they are always making jokes about one another, even about themselves, but their humor can be turned into an instrument of punishment when they choose.

Such a case was a great fight between the same two brothers who had fallen out over Kelemoke's misdemeanors, Aberi and Masalito.

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593 578 152 was not a good dancer, and when he tried to illustrate the leap he fell flat on his face.

[536] That was the end of the matter for Aberi. For weeks he was ridiculed, everyone asking him if he had lost his spear, or telling him to be careful not to trip and fall. But it was not quite the end of the matter for Masalito. He felt more angry than ever at his brother, because Aberi had made himself, and so the whole family, an object of ridicule. Masalito felt this an added insult to himself. Even Kelemoke was furious. So relations between the two brothers got worse and worse, and every time there was a silence in the camp Masalito would complain in a loud voice about his brother and his brother's wife.

593 578 152 621 626 689 At first this was tolerated, but finally it threatened to split the camp in two. Masalito began naming all his friends and relatives to support him in ignoring Aberi; he refused to say a word to his brother. Of course his brother could claim support from the same relatives and friends, and tension was spreading throughout both camps. That was when the molimo stepped in and showed public disapproval of Masalito. The original source of the dispute, and Aberi's undoubted wrongdoing, were forgotten. Masalito was guilty of the much more serious crime of splitting the hunting band into opposing factions. He himself was then ridiculed and shamed into silence. After that it was only one or two days before the two brothers became good friends and hunting companions once again.

578 626 576 836 Disputes were generally settled with little reference to the alleged rights and wrongs of the case, but chiefly with the intention of restoring peace to the community. One night Kenge slipped out of our hut on an amorous expedition to the hut of Manyalibo, who had an [152] attractive daughter, one of Kenge's many admirers. Shortly afterward there was a howl of rage and Kenge came flying back across the

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clearing with a furious Manyalibo hurling sticks and stones after him. Manyalibo then took up a position in the middle of the clearing and woke the whole camp up, calling out in a loud voice and denouncing Kenge as an incestuous good-for-nothing. Actually Kenge was only very distantly related to the girl, and the flirtation was not at all out of order, though marriage might have been. Several people tried to point this out to Manyalibo, but he became increasingly vociferous. He said that it wasn't so much that Kenge had tried to sleep with his daughter, but that he had been brazen enough to crawl right over her sleeping father to get at her, waking him up in the process. This was a considered insult, for any decent youth would have made a prior arrangement to meet his girl elsewhere. He called on Kenge to justify himself. But Kenge was too busy laughing and only managed to call out "You are making too much noise!" This seemed a poor defense, but in fact it was not. Manyalibo set up another hue and cry about Kenge's general immorality and disrespect for his elders, and strode up and down the camp rattling on the roofs of huts to call everyone to his defense.

Moke took the place in the center of the camp where Manyalibo had stood, and where everyone stands who wants to address the whole camp formally. He gave a low whistle, like the whistle given on the hunt to call for silence. When everyone was quiet he told Manyalibo that the noise was giving him a headache, and he wanted to sleep. Manyalibo retorted that this matter was more serious than Moke's sleep. Moke replied in a very deliberate, quiet voice, "You are making too much noise—you are killing the forest, you are killing the hunt. It is for us older men to sleep at night and not to worry about the youngsters. They know what to do and what not to do." Manyalibo growled with dissatisfaction, but he went back to his hut, taunted by well-directed remarks from Kenge and his friends.

Whether Kenge had done something wrong or not was relatively immaterial. Manyalibo had done the greater wrong by waking the

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593 595 598 606 607 887 At this, old Sau, who had been sitting on the ground throughout, with Kamaikan's baby on her lap, handed the baby to her weeping daughter-in-law and slowly got to her feet. Her son and Ekianga were now both armed with stout sticks, about four inches thick and three feet long, and they were lashing out with no reservations. Sau hobbled up to them and calmly pushed her way between; then she turned and put her head against Ekianga's stomach and her backside against her son's legs, and forced them apart. They continued trying to fight each other around the old lady, reaching out far so as not to hit her, but it was just too difficult. Ekianga was the first to throw away his weapon, which he did over Sau's head, with all his might. But Amabosu ducked and it missed him. Amabosu then threw his club on the ground and led his mother back to his hut. His wife meanwhile had been joined by Kamaikan, and they both were playing happily with the baby.

621 626 578 181 This incident illustrates one of the most remarkable features of Pygmy life—the way everything settles itself with apparent lack of organization. Co-operation is the key to Pygmy society; you can expect it and you can demand it, and you have to give it. If your wife nags you at night so that you cannot sleep, you merely have to raise your voice and call on your friends and relatives to help you. Your wife will do the same, so whether you like it or not the whole camp becomes involved. At this point someone—very often an older person with too many relatives and friends to be accused of being partisan—steps in with the familiar remark that everyone is making too much noise, or else diverts the issue onto a totally different track so that people forget the origin of the argument and give it up.

621 626 578 Issues other than disputes are settled the same way, without leadership appearing from any particular individual. If it is a matter involving the hunt, every adult male discusses it until there is agreement.

THE GIVER OF THE LAW

The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, "Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

own father had died, and a man to her. And now that he wanted to have a wife of his own she had made him a hunting net, but what did this worthless girl do? She gave Yambabo a hefty slap. Yambabo, however, had lost all her fight and could only whimper. When she had reached her mother's village she had promptly been turned around and made to walk all the way back, right through the night. Badorinji continued, telling everyone that her daughter had been a no good right from the start; all she liked doing was eating, sleeping, and going with boys. She would do no work, and she had refused Taphu, who loved her, many, many times. Then Badorinji ended with a masterpiece of statesmanship. She said that she would betroth her youngest daughter to Taphu, which would allow Kenge to marry Maliamo, and that she would have nothing further to do with Yambabo. Yambabo would lose Taphu, and without her mother's help she would never be able to make a respectable marriage, for she had no other brothers. She could find someone to marry her, but unless a girl were given in exchange for her she would have no status and no security. Only her mother or Kenge could give her away and receive a girl in exchange.

Yambabo let out a cry of protest at this. She said that she was tired and wanted to lie down, and why did everyone shout at her. Her mother slapped her once more and asked her if she would marry Taphu or not. Yambabo, with a final wail of protest that everyone had treated her so badly that she would surely die, gave up the battle and said that she would marry Taphu, or anyone else for that matter.

For the first time Kenge stopped trying to pretend that he was not listening to what was going on. He called a young boy and told him to run to Babama village with the news, and to tell them to get ready to receive Yambabo's wedding party. He added, hopefully, "And tell Maliamo that she is my wife now and I want her to come here at once and cook my meals for me. I am too busy to go and collect her."

224 get one cut of one animal, another cut of another, depending on what part they played in the capture of each. In any case, even if there is only one animal, everyone will get something to eat. This does not mean that all families eat equally well, however; some have more than others, some better cuts. There is both a reward for special luck and prowess, and a charitable mechanism for those who have shown neither. Sometimes the net hunters catch an okapi; in this case there is enough meat to feed the camp for a week, and everyone eats and eats well.

The meat is cut up by the man who killed the animal, or anyone who knows the rules. In any case there are always arguments. The man who makes a [626] mistake is cried down; they all know [591] the rules, or think that they know them. Government, as far as distribution of spoils is concerned, is by argument and common consent without specific leadership in any individual—the typical pygmy way of making decisions and ordering events.

In the case of the hunter who catches his animal all alone, without help of any kind, the carcass belongs to him alone. [626] Theoretically, he and his family could eat it all up if he wished, but there is little chance that this would happen; he would not dare face public opinion. [439] He would be labeled a mean man and would suffer for it in the end. It may happen however that he is behind in his gifts to his Negro host. In this case he will take the carcass uncut into the village, to avoid trouble from that quarter, and the other pygmies will not hold this against him, provided that there is other food to eat.

[171] The division of spoils after an elephant hunt follows the same principle as it does among the Indians of Tierra del Fuego or Lower California when a whale washes ashore—regardless of who may be responsible there is a

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62 571 561 [888] **Government.**—There are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp. In making any decisions concerning the whole camp, two factors are involved. The first of these is respect for older people.

561 571 576 888 [626] A pygmy will always, in addressing a man of an older age group in any formal situation, call him "senior"; he will listen respectfully to an older man and will always obey any reasonable orders he may give. If a younger man shows disrespect, the other members of the camp will gang up on him and berate him. This respect for age, and for the opinions of wise old men, is the basis of pygmy government.

623 571 561 [888] Secondly, while the opinions of most of the old men are respected, every man in the camp is entitled to state his own views on any subject. Thus, during the evening talking time, the pygmies will discuss whether to move camp, where to move it, and why; or whether to go net hunting, and where to hunt. The discussion has no leader and may go on for several evenings. Finally the men who are shouting out different opinions will come to an agreement and the decision will be acted upon.

623 571 561 888 [828] In general it is the older and more experienced men who make the decision, but as some of the old men are considered eccentrics and freaks, little attention is paid to them. Rather, it is an oligarchy of the more respected among the old men, a body with no formal membership or specific composition. [562] In their decisions the pungent remarks of the women also have a considerable influence.

594 ## Pygmy Social Organization

Families and their extensions.—The smallest normal social unit in a pygmy camp is the individual biological

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